



NUTRITION NEWS

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STUDENT NUTRITION
DEPARTMENT

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MERRY CHRISTMAS!!

It's the most wonderful time of the year! There's just something magical about this season. Spirits are lifted, the different mood boosting aromas in the air, the catchy tunes always playing, the season of giving, all the tasty food and treats, the cool, crisp air that makes you want to bundle up with a classic Christmas movie, all the lovely family time, and good, long breaks away from reality.

Oh, did I mention all the tasty food and treats? While this part of the holiday season is something to look forward to, it can also be overwhelming and feel like the options of holiday treats are endless and like they are the unneeded gifts that keep on giving... Well let's talk about what our bodies go through when we flood them with a whole bunch of highly processed foods, specifically how our blood glucose levels spike, the downsides, and some hacks that can be done to still enjoy our favorite foods.



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What happens during a glucose or fructose spike

When we eat sugar (and starch, but to a lesser extent):



Our body **puts on fat** to protect us



Our **hunger hormones** get dysregulated



Our organs and skin age because of **glycation**



Our **hormonal balance** takes a hit



Inflammation goes up



We inch closer to **type 2 diabetes**

LET'S TALK BLOOD GLUCOSE/SUGAR SPIKES!

Our blood sugar levels impact everything, from our sleep, our fertility, how quickly we age and how we look, how we feel, the health of our organs, our moods, and many other things. The goal here is sustainable eating, food freedom, and being your own ally, while still enjoying food and maintaining healthy/balanced blood glucose levels. So what are some hacks that can be done to help lessen a blood glucose spike after eating our favorite treats/foods and what are the benefits of keeping a balanced blood sugar level?

1) Pair your cookie, cake or desired treat with a protein, fat, or fiber: If we have carbs, starches or sugars all on their own all the glucose from them gets into our stomachs, then our intestines, then into our blood stream very quickly and uninterrupted, so they are absorbed quicker and just flow right through and create a big glucose spike. So let's put some clothes on our carbs and sugars! Whether that be a protein, fat, or fiber, this way we will slow down their little trip through our body. Actually, if we add fiber, the fiber will coat the inside of our intestines and we will absorb less of the glucose into our blood stream. Some good foods to pair sweet carbs with: Greek yogurt, mixed nuts, jerky. When we eat something starchy like pasta or rice, go for green veggies with a vinaigrette beforehand.

2) Drink 1 tablespoon of apple cider vinegar in a tall glass of water before eating sweets and treats: Vinegar is the closest thing we can find to a silver bullet when it comes to glucose. Vinegar tells our muscles to uptake more glucose and make glycogen, stored glucose, faster than normal. So when we eat a cookie, the glucose rushes into our blood stream, our muscles under the action of vinegar will uptake it quicker so it takes it out of our blood stream. Vinegar also tells our mitochondria (powerhouse of our cells) to burn more fat, so it's actually as efficient as a lot of thermogenic fat burners out there. Lastly, vinegar slightly inactivates an enzyme, called alpha-amylase, which is a big deal in the glucose world. This enzyme is the one we have in our stomach that breaks down starch into individual glucose molecules. 1 Tbsp of vinegar before a meal, during a meal, or even after a meal is shown to be effective in supporting our mitochondria to burn fat and our muscles to suck up more sugar from our blood stream, which is going to make sure we don't hit such a high and then crash as hard.

3) Eat a savory breakfast and avoid sugar first thing in the morning: Many of us have not experienced what it's like to live a full day after a breakfast that kept our glucose levels steady. A lot of people operate with this big spike in blood glucose for breakfast, a big spike for lunch, a big spike for dinner and then wonder why we have so many cravings or altered moods or no energy or poor sleep. Spiked blood sugar is to blame. Change the first 1/3 of our day and it will be easier to focus and do better the rest of the 2/3 of our day. Changing our breakfast can make all the difference. Refrain from that donut first thing in the morning and instead eat something nutrient dense like avocado toast, eggs and bacon, oats with seeds, protein powder, nut butter, or have a smoothie with minimal fruit. Our bodies will thank us for it later in the day when we are in a better mood, have more energy, less cravings and sleeping better at night.

BLOOD GLUCOSE/SUGAR SPIKES CONTINUED...

4) Activity levels, stress and sleep all have a major impact on blood glucose level:

Exercise is crucial. When we workout we absorb glucose from our bloodstream and put it into our muscles. For someone with a stressful job and where their job really wrecks their sleep, the best activity would be to do a 5 minute high intensity exercise first thing in the morning. Example: Do as many burpees as you can in these 5 minutes to get your muscles activated so that any glucose that appears because of a stressful situation will be up taken more quickly. Also stay active throughout the day. So take another 5 minutes after lunch and go up and down the stairs or for a brisk walk. Our muscles are really our biggest ally. This is interesting because exercise can also be another stressor, but we know that in the balance, exercise is actually a hermetic stress so it has more benefits than it does stressful downsides. Exercise really compensates for other stressors. Stress and poor sleep make our bodies have a harder time handling glucose spikes. For example, someone who had a cappuccino after 8 hours of sleep versus someone who had a cappuccino after 6 hours of sleep, experienced less of a glucose spike than the one who only slept 6 hours. The same foods, depending on how well we sleep, will impact our blood glucose differently. Stress can even cause spikes in the absence of food. When we are stressed, our body releases glucose because it wants to give us fuel to run on. Limiting stress, staying active and getting plenty of good quality sleep is so important for our overall health.

5) Timing of meals affects our glucose levels: No matter how long we fast for, when our stomach is empty, it is very, very receptive to anything we put in our body. So it is important not to start with starches or sugars because on an empty stomach the impact of something sweet will be sooo much greater than if we have something sweet after a full meal. So have a sweet for a dessert, not a snack, or meal, nor first thing in the morning.

6) Appetizers: We all love appetizers, but let's be real, they are big culprits in blood sugar spikes and we either get too full off of them before our real meal arrives or they just make us hungrier. The best hack is to add a veggie starter to our meals. So choose a salad, lentils, carrots, tomatoes, or whatever other vegetable is palatable, and eat those FIRST. Vegetables have a lot of fiber and a lot of good things happen from fiber as stated earlier. Fiber will go through our stomach and into our intestines and actually create this mesh on the inside walls of our intestines and this mesh will reduce the amount of glucose our body can absorb. So anything that comes down after the vegetables, the absorption will be reduced, so we will see a massive reduction in the glucose spike even though we're eating the exact same pizza, pasta or rice dish afterwards. Fiber actually stays in our body for 1-2 hours, so if we wanted to eat some vegetables at home first before going out to eat, then that's an option too.

**Tracking your glucose levels throughout the day with a CGM (continuous glucose monitor) can be very beneficial to know what foods make your glucose levels go crazy or keep track of when there's a spike due to stress or upon waking, and also taking note of how you feel during and after these elevations. If you have any type of metabolic marker, like diabetes, PCOS, talking to your doctor for a prescription for a CGM could save you money.

Holiday Cornbread Casserole

Ingredients:

- 1 Box Jiffy Corn Mix
- 2 Eggs
- ½ C of Sugar
- 1 Stick of Melted Butter
- ½ C Low-Fat Sour Cream
- 1 15oz Can of Cream Corn

Directions:

- Melt the butter in a large mixing bowl
- Add the sour cream and mix
- Mix in the drained corn and the creamed corn
- Mix in the Jiffy Corn mix, sugar, and eggs
- Mix until just combined
- * Add a little milk if mixture is too dry
- Grease a 9x13 pan and pour into pan
- Bake at 350°F for about 30 min or until toothpick inserted comes out clean

Healthy Holidays

Who doesn't love all the delicious food that surrounds the holiday season?! While yes, it is important to focus on choosing healthful food options, it is also important to remember that all food has a nutritional purpose, and that moderation is key. When you're surrounded by all your favorite holiday foods this season, don't allow yourself to feel guilty for indulging in some of your favorites! Allow yourself to enjoy your favorite foods this holiday season by starting with moderation. Start by putting some of the healthier holiday food items on your plate, such as the

collard greens, green bean casserole, roasted vegetables, baked turkey, or ham (or both!). But also leave room for your favorites, such as the apple or pumpkin pie, the cheesy casseroles, the buttery rolls, and whatever other delicious holiday items you might find guilt in eating. Allow yourself to lean into your cravings. In many situations, when a person tries to cut out all their favorite foods for a diet, they tend to get diet fatigue and "fall off the wagon" and binge on all their favorite, less healthy foods. This is why it is important to allow yourself to enjoy your favorite foods and why moderation is key! Also, try to incorporate some physical activity for the whole family into your holiday routine. Going for a walk around the block or playing ball or hide-n-seek outside are great ways for the family to get active together this holiday season. Ultimately, have a great, safe, healthy holiday season filled with yummy food and fun activities!



It's not the load that breaks you,
it's the way you carry it.



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